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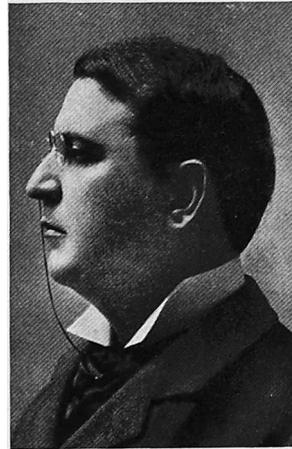
AT THE JUNGLE DRAMATIC AGENCY  
By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of Dramatic Mirror

## HY. MAYER—HUMOROUS CARICATURIST

In the Ryks Museum at Amsterdam is a peculiarly comic composition by A. P. van der Venne, entitled "Fishing for Souls," in which two fleets of rowboats on an inland mere are manned, the one by Catholic prelates in magnificent sacerdotal garments, the other by Protestant clergy in black robes and large felt hats. All are handling fish-lines or scoop-nets with which naked manikins are caught, to be added to the respective folds on the shores. Aside from the artistic excellence of the work as a painting, this panel in its delicious satire may be called one of the forerunners of comic art, which Hogarth and Cruikshank and Nast and Oberländer followed after.

Hy. Mayer is in the first line of succession. Humor is the finest perfection of poetic genius, and Mayer is a wit, a poet, and an artist. Pope tells us, in his "Essay on Criticism," that "wit and judgment often are at strife." In Mayer the union is harmonious.

It is rare that caricature does not have a sting; often it is a barbed arrow, and frequently even it is tipped with poison. Few caricaturists have escaped falling into malice. Take the work of the most famous, of Léandre, Coran d'Ache, Forain, or of Phil May and Harry Furniss, or of Oberländer, Harburger, and Busch. Their *goaks*, as Artemus Ward calls comics, are not always harmless. Not so with Hy. Mayer. His levity has a benign smile, there is nothing spiteful about it. Indeed, this is what makes him a *humorous* caricaturist. The dangerous ground of political cartoons he treads even with unction. In "A Yard of Poppies," a travesty on the yards of



HY. MAYER  
From a Photograph

pinks, violets, cats, and puppies, which we all know, he presents a line of hilarious members of the people's party, yet with innocent raillery.



VIVE L'ARMÉE

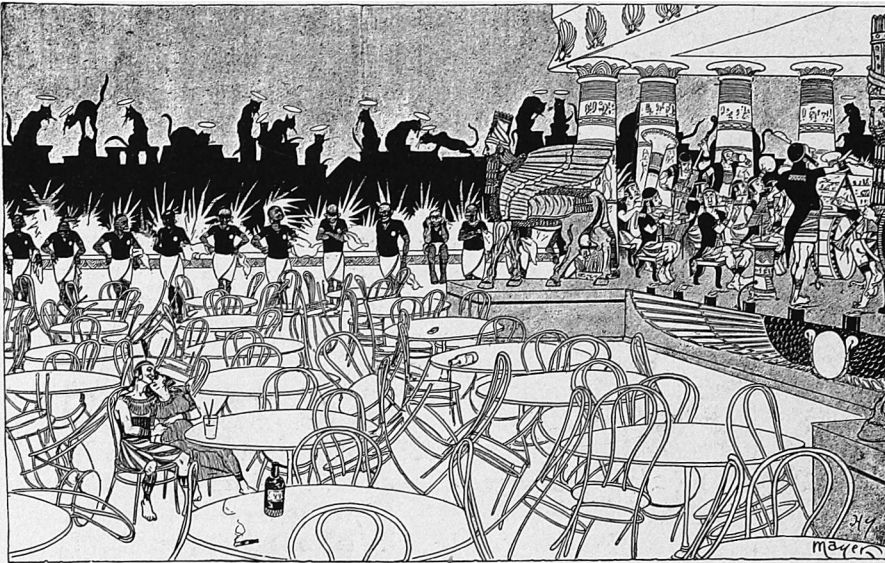
By Hy. Mayer

Courtesy of Black and White

I think, however, that the strong point in his cartoons is the philosophic satire which they contain. During the Dreyfus agitation in France, there appeared his famous cartoon, "Vive l'Armée!" The entire episode of French history is depicted in this cartoon as it could not be done in columns upon columns of editorial writings. It would

be the shallowest mind that could ever put upon Mayer's head cap and bells. The sketch, "My Long-lost Brother," Uncle Sam and John Bull embracing each other, with a wink, has been copied all over the world because of its exquisite irony. His series of unconventional statues, which appeared some time ago in a metropolitan magazine, hit off the different men put on the pedestal to perfection. A like series was prepared for a London periodical on English characters.

As in all other things in this present age of novelty, there is noth-



THE ORIGINAL ROOF-GARDEN  
By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of Life

ing new under the sun in caricature. How little that comes forth of wit there is that has claim to true originality. Sterne, stealing the thought from Burton, who had said the same before, says that what we lay claim to as our own is but pouring out of many bottles into one and serving the mixture up in a new shape. So with pictorial burlesque. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the mask of caricature was put on by the early Greeks, and that the sad Heraclitus may sometimes have cracked his sides with mirth, and his frolicsome neighbor, old Democritus, may have wept with laughter. Cruikshank imitated Gilroy, even as Davenport, when he was funny, used to imitate Nast. All the brethren of humorous design ring the changes on the elongated visage, the wide-stretched mouth, the glaring eyes, the skinny leg, the scaramouch action, the extravagant expression, and

preternatural proportion, burlesquing camp and senate, church and palace, and holding up to sport the fat, the lean, the tall, the short, the high and low, the rich, the poor, in all the monstrosities and absurdities that make up the farcical view of the great drama of



THE FIRST WAGNER OPERA IN JAPAN

By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of Life

human life, as seen through the distorted spectacles of the whimsical caricaturist.

Nevertheless we must recognize in Mayer an unusual fecundity of mind and inventiveness. Take his "Worm's Eye Views," of which he has given a wedding, a fire, a picnic, and others; they are all exceptionally good.

We have no right to quarrel with a man of merit because he does not perform impossibilities. Of late years invention has been so

whipped and spurred, and incessantly urged upon the full stretch by necessity, that until mankind be endowed with some additional attributes, we may almost venture to say that invention is jaded, if not exhausted. Still men of quick perception offer new combinations of graphic drolling, and fancy in her most freakish moods will continue to hit off to perfection the follies and foibles of mankind.

It is surprising how the unctuous and rollicking "preachments" of our artist vary. There is no repetition of types. In "A Riskée Situation," each facial expression tells its own story of inward thought. Mayer never, by the way, uses models, and with his thousands of sketches, he never draws two faces alike.

Mayer was born in Germany, lived in England, was educated again in Germany, and traveled all over the world; hence his cosmopolitan versatility. The synthetic interpretation of every race and condition of men is fairly within his grasp. With succinct drollery he gives an astounding variety of quips and quirks.

Artistically considered we must rank the work before us of the highest merit. There is more



A YARD OF POPPIES  
By Hy. Mayer

than a ridiculous presentation of subjects, serious or otherwise. Arsène Alexandre defines German humor as "A peculiar inventiveness, a turn of wit, at the same time ingenious and grotesque, unex-



SOCIETY CARTOON

By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of Life

pected and full of straightforwardness." As such Mayer's humor is German. His work is, however, French in its graceful lines with the indefinable accent of daintiness which we find in Cherot or Kaemerer, *vide* the "Chinese Musicians," or the illustrations to his forthcoming "Adventures of a Japanese Doll," or his animal drawings. In his "A Trip to Toyland," as well as in the writing of the jokes



ILLUSTRATION FOR "ADVENTURES OF A JAPANESE DOLL"  
By Hy. Mayer

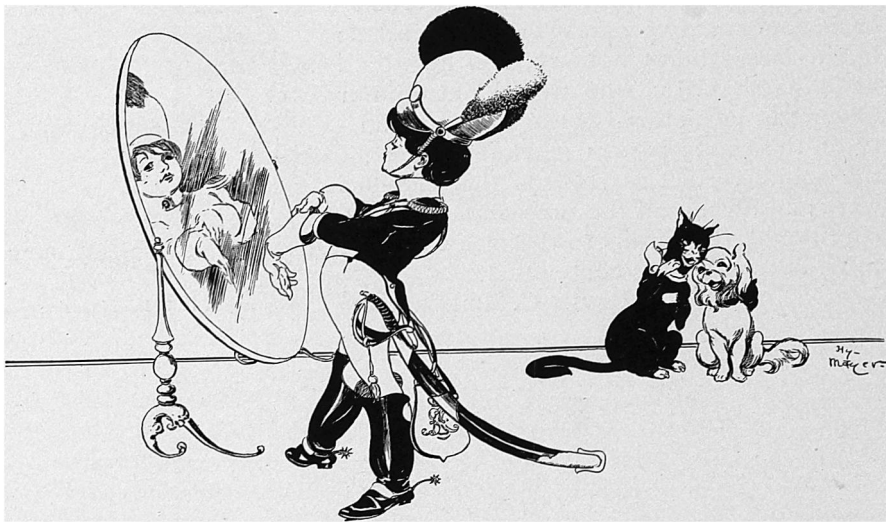


ILLUSTRATION FOR "A TRIP TO TOYLAND"  
By Hy. Mayer





CARTOON  
By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of New York Herald

smile in the common run of experience is a public benefactor. Measured by this canon of judgment, Mayer is a public benefactor. The depressing, the tragic, the cynical, the sarcastic, the simply prosaic in life, needs the leaven of the humorous that men like Mayer furnish. The caricature that stoops to cruelty or meanness may properly be reprehended; but a laugh hurts nobody, and he would be a harsh critic who would put humor under ban in pictorial art. The popularity of the comic papers is an evidence of the public verdict as regards this class of work; and when all the pros and cons are considered, the verdict of the masses is not to be overlooked or condemned.

DAVID C. PREYER.

which he illustrates, he further declares a facile pen; in fact, this "Trip to Toyland" is one of the best children's books that has for a long time come from the press. The mirth-inspiring school of art, with never-flagging pencil, has covered enough *charta pura* to placard the walls of China, and etched as much copper as would have sheathed the merchant marine of the world, and to be ranked among the first is Henry Mayer.

Some one has said that the artist or writer who can supply a pleasant thought

or excite a



CHINESE MUSICIANS  
By Hy. Mayer  
Courtesy of Pall Mall Magazine